

## A Father or a Daddy?

Written by Richard Marks, PhD

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Is it possible to be a father and not a daddy? If so, what would be the difference? I think there are many.

Before we discuss this difference, allow me the time to talk about three types of fathers. The first is the biological father. This type of father only requires of few moments and the contribution of some bodily fluids. There are many fathers in America today that meet these criteria. In the African-American community today about 60% of all children born have no father in their lives. The Caucasian community is fast reaching this same trend. A second type of father is the protector-provider. This is the father of the past couple of decades. These fathers made sure that their children had a roof over their head, food on the table, and clothes on their backs. These fathers were responsible for their family's physical and material needs, but were negligent in the issues of the heart. The last model of fathering, the biblical model, is the daddy; or better known as Abba Father model. This type of father gives his heart away. The measure of this father is in how much loyalty, trust, and emotional security the children feel with their father. This is the father who is the essence of the fifteen traits of love found in 1 Corinthians 13. This father is strong, but operates out of nurture and care most of the time. This is the essence of our Abba Father, or better translated: DADDY!

What makes someone a daddy and not a father? The first is that a daddy cultivates a sense of family identity. In my house, I let my children know that we are proud to be Marks' and that being a Marks is special. I also let them know that I am onboard as being a Marks. Second, a daddy shows an ongoing love and respect and nurture for his wife in front of the kids and when they are not present. He makes his marriage relationship a priority and seeks to love her with all his heart. Third, a daddy keeps his promises. If he says he will play a game after work, then he does it. He follows through on his commitments to his children. A fourth thing about a daddy is that he allows his children to make mistakes and sometimes experience failure. He shows respect, encouragement and support, but a caring and loving dad guides his children in decision

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making and allows them to take the consequences, both positive and negative. A fifth trait of a daddy is that he shows affection and touches his children lovingly and tenderly. My 16 year old son still wants me to wrap my arms around him and give him hugs. I love hugging my children. I need it from them and they need it from me. Lastly, a daddy is an encourager in the home and not a discourager. We do not provoke our children to anger, but urge them onward to goals, ideals, and maturity. We encourage in love.

Are you a daddy or a father?